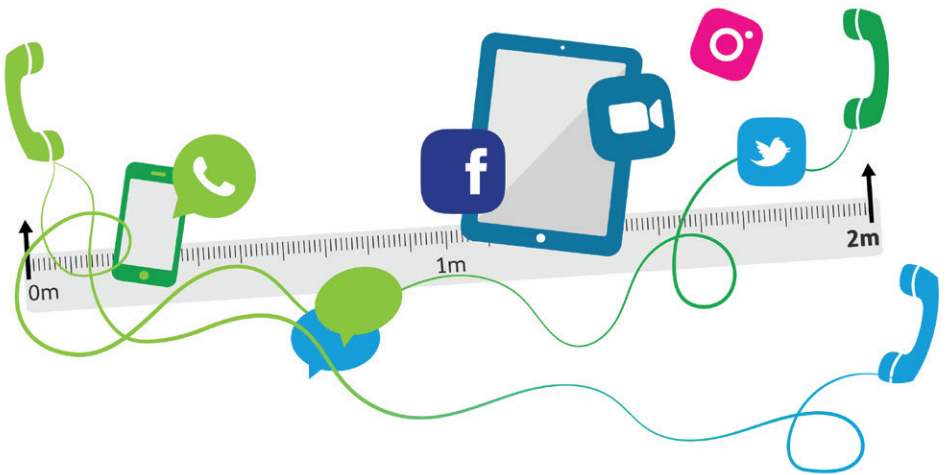


Keeping older people socially connected whilst physically distant



**A guide for Age Scotland
member groups**

Who we are

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life.

Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people can make the most of later life.

Our three strategic aims are to:



Help older people to be as well as they can be



Promote a positive view of ageing and later life



Tackle loneliness and isolation

How we can help

We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. Later life can bring changes and opportunities to your life and you may need to know about rights, organisations and services which are unfamiliar to you.

That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on a range of topics including benefits and entitlements, social care, legal issues such as Power of Attorney, housing and much more. All of our guides are available to download for free from our website, or you can contact our helpline team to have copies posted to you for free.

The Age Scotland **helpline** is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland looking for information and advice.

Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.

For information, advice and friendship



Call us free on: 0800 12 44 222
(Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm)



Visit agescotland.org.uk to find out more.



Keeping older people socially connected whilst physically distant.

A guide for Age Scotland member groups

This guide aims to help Age Scotland Member groups stay socially connected to their members through telephone and digital connections.

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Community Development Team

Age Scotland's Community Development team works in partnership with our member groups, Regional Ambassadors, and voluntary and statutory organisations across the country to make Scotland's communities better places for older people. Our job is to support the development of strong and vibrant older people's groups and organisations in Scotland by providing information, advice, resources, and support to assist Age Scotland member groups with the delivery and development of their services and activities.



Staying connected

Anyone can struggle from feelings of loneliness and isolation. Since the start of lockdown all our lives have changed and as we work through the steps towards our new normal it is important to remember that we will all have down days. The way we live our lives has changed for the foreseeable future, but we must keep connected to those who we would see in our day to day lives.

Staying connected to other people is good for our health and wellbeing. Making time for regular phone calls and staying in touch, whether by phone or online, these are great ways to keep in contact when we cannot meet face to face.

Keeping in touch with group members allows members to feel connected to the group and know that they have not been forgotten. Keeping connected with group members will also ensure that there is an appetite to return to the group when it is safe to do so.

Maximising involvement and participation

During these times when we can't see each other as much as we would like, it is important to keep connected with your members. As you know, for some of your members attending your group may be their only source of social interaction in the week. It is important that we engage with members to ensure that this interaction remains, even if we can't meet face to face.

To keep connected to everyone, making sure no one is excluded, you may need to use a range of methods. **Here are some ideas:**

1. Phone your members

You may prefer to keep in touch with your members over the phone, organising weekly, fortnightly, or monthly calls at agreed days and times. This can go a long way to help prevent loneliness and will also improve mental health if people are self-isolating or social distancing. These calls will also ensure that members are keeping in touch with the group. If you have large numbers of people to contact, this may be something to share with other committee members. For members who live alone, it may be a good idea to phone them on a regular basis.

Ensure that you have up to date information on members, have permission to hold these details and that members are aware of who holds this information and, more importantly, ensure that they are securely stored.

2. Text or SMS messaging

This is a great way to stay in touch for members who do not have a Smartphone but have a mobile phone, particularly if they find it difficult communicating over the phone, for example members with a hearing loss.



3. Buddy members with each other

You could set up a system for your members to be matched with each other, so they phone every week for a chat.

4. Set up a page on Facebook or a WhatsApp group

This is a good way for members who have smartphones or are online to keep in touch with each other and share updates.

5. Virtual coffee morning / friendship circle

A Zoom coffee morning is a great way to connect with your members if they are online. For members with a poor or no internet connection you can use technology that allows them to telephone into a meeting instead. Age Scotland has a telephone conferencing system you can use to hold meetings that your members can join using their telephone. Please contact your local Community Development Officer for more information.

6. Produce a keeping safe and well pack

You could put together an information pack for your members with tips on looking after their wellbeing at home. You could include links to useful websites and contact numbers where they can get more specialist help and support. Some of these are listed in the Support organisations and resources section at the end of this guide.

7. Link members with activities in the community

There are activities that members can get involved in without leaving their home. You might produce an activity calendar and share a list of resources on keeping active, having fun, practising mindfulness and pursuing learning.

Tips for making conversation

Many of your group members might have had to shield during the Covid-19 period, as everyone is finding the adjustments to a different normal challenging, for those who are shielding the change to their daily routine could have lasting impacts. Many may feel low when you speak to them.

You will already be familiar with much of this but as a summary we have pulled together some hints and tips.

Active listening

Active listening requires the listener to fully concentrate, understand and respond to what is being said. It is about putting the other person first.

Top tips to active listening

- be aware of and listen to the way they are speaking. Listen to clues to what they really mean. This may include tone of voice, hesitancy, their choice of words etc.
- say 'Yes', 'Ok' or 'Mhmm' to show the person you are listening and following the conversation
- ask questions to clarify particular points.

Active listening also involves

Paraphrasing

Indicate briefly that you have understood the key issues - it often helps the person to focus and relate their story more clearly.

You can do this by saying something like 'so what you're saying is...' and repeating what you have understood the issues to be in your own words. This shows you are not just listening but trying to understand.



Reflecting

The process of paraphrasing or restating both the feelings and words of the speaker. It's a helpful technique as it can show you have accurately understood the person's situation and perceived how they are feeling.

The benefits of reflecting act as a prompt for the person to continue and shows you are following the situation as they are describing it to you.

Summarising

This is a summary of the person's specific concerns or feelings from their perspective. Summarising involves putting things 'in a nutshell':

- it helps to manage the complexity of the problems
- it helps to focus on a central problem
- it helps to focus and bring the interaction to an end.

Open questioning

Ask open questions (how, where, when, who, what) that require the person to give more than just a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

For example, instead of saying 'has that been going on for a long time?' ask 'how long has this been going on?'

By doing this, you encourage the caller to keep talking. Try to avoid asking 'Why?' on its own. The person may not know the reason 'why' in the first place.

Ways to keep in touch digitally



Email

An email address is unique to you; only you can see the emails that are sent to it. You log into your email account securely with a password that you create. You can access the same email account on a computer, tablet or phone. Examples of email services are Google (Gmail) or Microsoft Outlook.

To set up an email address, you can usually just use your name followed by @gmail.com, however if the name you choose is being used already, the service may suggest alternatives for you or may suggest adding in numbers, for example mrsmith32@gmail.com

After setting up your email address you will be prompted to choose a password. It is important that the password is something easy for you to remember but not something that can be easily guessed by a criminal (known as "hacked"). For example your pet's name might be guessed by someone who knows you, whereas twirlismyfavourite would be hard to guess but easy to remember.

Your email account will include an address book where you can store details of your contacts, such as their name and e-mail address. You can also create an email group for your member group which will allow you to email all your members at the one time. There are two ways to do this:

- if you have their permission to do so, you can email everyone so that everyone can see everyone else's email address
- if you don't have permission to share email addresses, use "BCC" (blind copy). You can still email everyone, but they will only see your email address.

Either way, members will be able to reply to everyone, by clicking the reply all button.



Smart phones and tablets

If an internet connection is available, smart phones and tablets can be used to connect with others via apps (short for applications). Computer software designed to operate on a mobile device, apps allow access quickly, are user friendly and can do everything that you could do on a computer.

How to download apps:

1. go to the **app store** or **play store** on your device
2. search for the app you would like and click **install**
3. when it has installed you will see its **icon** on your home screen
4. click on the app:
 - if you have used the app before you will be asked to sign in with your email address and password
 - if you are a new user, you will be asked to sign up. You will need an email address to sign up, then follow the prompts to create an account

... whilst physically distant



WhatsApp

WhatsApp is an app that you can install for free on your smartphone. You can send one-to-one messages, including photos, or create group chats for up to 100 people to stay in touch. You can also make voice and video calls.

If your group members have WhatsApp, a group could be created which would allow members to have a conversation with each other through the chat function in the app. All you would need is the group members' mobile phone numbers stored in your phone prior to going onto WhatsApp.

To set up a WhatsApp group for your members:

1. go into the WhatsApp application on your phone or tablet
2. on the top right-hand side there's an **icon with three dots**. Tap that and choose the **new group** option
3. you will then be prompted to add participants
4. once you have added your participants you will be asked to **name the group**.
5. once you have chosen a name, click the green tick and the group is set up. You can add new members at any time



Social media



Social media is the term for internet applications that allow people to create and share content and connect socially. Social media is a fantastic way to stay in touch with family and friends. It is easy to access, whether you are using a computer, laptop, smart phone, or tablet.

Social media has so many benefits, but it is important to keep your personal information private. After you have created an account you might want to start sharing straight away. However, it is vital you check your privacy settings to ensure you know who you are sharing your information with.

To set up a social media account you will need:

- a desktop computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet
- access to the internet
- an email address.

Facebook

Facebook allows you to interact with friends online. It enables you to share photos, videos, and messages with individual people or with all your Facebook friends at once. You can also create private groups to send messages to multiple people in one space.

To create a Facebook account on your computer:

Go to the website **www.facebook.com**. Once on the website, it will ask you to log in or sign up. As you are creating a new account you will need to make sure you “sign up” rather than log in.

You need to enter your name, surname, email address, password, date of birth and gender. Click **sign up** and you now have a Facebook Profile.

You can personalise your profile by adding:

- information such as your home town, current location, school or universities you attended and workplace information. Facebook will automatically suggest people you may know from this information
- a profile picture and cover photos - this ensures that people know it is you
- your interests - this allows for suggestions from Facebook about pages you may like.

Once your profile is set up, you can add friends by sending **friend requests**: type your friend’s name in the search bar and then send the request.



To create a Facebook account on your phone or tablet:

1. go to the **app store** or **play store** on your device
2. search for Facebook and click **install**
3. when it has installed you will see its **icon** on your home screen with the rest of your apps
4. click on the app and follow the prompts as above to sign up.

Facebook and privacy

Facebook allows you to write posts that can be seen by everyone, but you can easily change this, so your posts are only seen by people you choose. A post allows you to put your thoughts out there for your friends to comment on - pictures and videos can be added to posts.

You can set your privacy in the settings tab: it can be set so that only friends can see your post, or everyone on Facebook. It is always important to check this before you post any information - always check the audience and make sure it is set to your preference. It is vital you do not share personal information such as address, date of birth or banks details on social media, it is also advised not to tell people when you will be going on holiday.

Once you have set up your profile, you can set up a private Facebook group or a Facebook page.

What's the difference between setting up a Facebook group or page for our group?

A Facebook group is primarily for people who share a common interest; members can freely post on the group and others can interact with them. A Facebook page allows you to promote your group to the public. When someone likes the page, they will start seeing updates from that page on their news feed. Anyone can like and interact with the page.

How to set up a private Facebook group

You can set up a private Facebook group and invite all your members who have Facebook to join. Anyone in the group will be able to share photos, make comments and start a conversation and only those in the group can see what has been said.

Once you have logged into your Facebook account, click **groups** from the menu on the left. On the top right hand corner there is a **create new group** option. When you click this, a form will appear with four parts that you need to complete to create your group:

1. **name:** choose a name for your new group. The name can be anything you want, but as people may search your group's name to look for you on Facebook, it might be better to set the Facebook group's name as the name of your actual group
2. **privacy setting:** you have 2 options:
 - **public:** anyone on Facebook can see who's in the group and what they post
 - **private:** only group members can see who is in the group and their posts
3. **visibility setting:** also known as the "Hide Group" setting
 - **visible:** anyone on Facebook can find the group
 - **hidden:** only members can find the group. New members would have to be invited to join by the group admin
4. **add members:** The last step is to add your group members. Facebook will suggest people from your own friends list and will also recommend more friends as you start choosing. You must add at least one friend before you can create the group - you can add one friend to start then add more later.

You will automatically be added as a member of the group and will be recognised as the group's administrator, so you will be able to add or remove group members.



How to set up a Facebook page.

This will allow anyone on Facebook to 'like' your page, which allows them to see the content that you share on the page. You may wish to share information about past and present group activities so everyone who has liked the page will be kept up to date on what is happening at the group.

Once you are on Facebook, click **pages**, then click **create a page**, then click **get started**. You will go through the following steps to set up your group's Facebook page:

1. **name:** choose a name for your page. This would be the name of your group or whatever you want the page to be called
 - you will be asked to choose what category your page is. Click **Companies and Organisations** then choose **Community Group or Community Organisation**
 - enter your group's website details if you have one or skip this section if you do not have a website.
2. **profile picture and cover photo:** if you choose to use a photo with one of your group members, please remember to ask all members in the photograph for permission
3. **invite your friends to "like" your page.** Facebook will suggest people from your own friends list and also recommend more friends as you start choosing. You do not have to add friends to create the page, you can invite friends to like the page later
4. **create your first post.** You will automatically be recognised as the page administrator, and you will have to like the page



Zoom provides face to face video calls with multiple participants and gives the opportunity to share documents on your screen for participants to see. On-screen breakout rooms are also available to allow for people to be split into groups if they wish to talk about a specific subject.

The basic version of Zoom is free and you can use it for meetings of up to 40 mins with up to 100 participants. You can restart a meeting after the 40 minutes is up, which gives a good chance for a break before starting again.

The pro version of Zoom costs £11 per month. This allows meetings to last up to 24 hours and have 100+ participants.

To sign up for Zoom, you need your email address and will choose a password. You will also need to give your date of birth.

To set up a Zoom meeting:

1. **sign in** and click on your **account**
2. click **meetings**
3. click **schedule meeting**.
You will then have to fill in the following fields:
 - topic
 - description (this is optional)
 - date and time

Further down the page, other options will be available, and the meeting ID and password will be shown. Click **save** at the bottom of this page.

Zoom will then give you the opportunity to save the meeting details into your calendar, if you have one set up, or you can copy the invitation link and paste it into an email to send to all the attendees. The meeting is then set up.



Prior to the meeting:

1. log into Zoom and click **join meeting**
2. open the meeting by entering the **meeting ID** and **password**.
Invited people can now join and will appear as they sign in
3. when people sign in, they will be placed into a **waiting room**.
As the host you will have to allow them permission to enter the meeting
4. once all participants have joined, the meeting can be locked to ensure that nobody else can join.

Pre-meeting preparation

Prior to your group attending a Zoom session, you may want to send out some information for the meeting so that people have these documents for any activities or discussions you may be having on the call.

Sharing your screen

If you wish to share your screen, it is a good idea to have the documents open at the bottom of your screen prior to the zoom session starting.

If you are using **videos**, you need to ensure that you are sharing the computer's sound so that people can hear the video. This comes up when you open a video to share as an option down in the left-hand corner, so it is important to tick this box.

The chat box

If you are sharing documents through the chat box, ensure that these are downloaded to your computer first. There can sometimes be issues sharing from cloud-based files.

Everyone has an empty chat box when they join the call, so anything you put in there before people join will not be visible.

Keeping socially connected development plan

Over the lockdown older people's groups have used a range of methods to stay in contact. Age Scotland Community Development Officers, through their work on the Helpline and checking in with Age Scotland member groups, have heard that some older people have been disadvantaged by digital exclusion and unable to access the full range of communication methods because of

- informed choice
- uninformed choice
- lack of technology
- lack of software / applications
- poor or no internet connection
- level of confidence and skills with computer communication

You could use your learning from the COVID-19 lockdown to put a plan in place in case you find yourselves unable to restart your activities or having to suspend them again. If you need to close your group again would you be able to keep in contact with all your members to ensure they are keeping safe and well?

You might need to carry out an audit of your members to find out some of this, but you may know much of it already.



A development plan might look something like this:

Member contact details and preferred method of contact, with permission to use it. (Can they be accessed securely away from base?)	
Who will make the contact? (one person, more than one or using a buddy system)	
Hardware needed (landline, mobile phone, desktop computer, laptop, tablet, internet connection, Wi-Fi, web cam)	
Application / software needed (social media, email, messaging, video conferencing and telephone conferencing)	
Training needed (including online safety and accessibility)	
Well-being support needed (online and phonline health support and online well-being activities)	
Funding needed to meet these needs	



Keeping your information safe

GDPR, (General Data Protection Regulation) applies to any personal data that your group holds about your members. The group requires permission from its members to hold any personal data it gathers, and must ensure that members are aware of how this data will be used.

What is meant by Personal data?

- name and surname
- home address
- email address
- telephone number

For example, telephone numbers cannot be given to other group members without permission unless when this information was taken it was agreed that it could be passed between members.

All records holding members personal information must be kept in a safe place, preferably in a locked drawer or cabinet or a computer file you have protected with a password



Support from the community development team

The community development team can assist groups by setting up and holding Zoom meetings, or support groups in looking at ways to stay connected via digital platforms. We can provide support for external grants, if needed, to allow groups to purchase equipment required to undertake digital meetings.

The team can assist with action planning to ensure that all members are comfortable with this way of meeting and are able to interact with each other.

Support organisations and resources

Ability Net

Ability Net supports people of any age, living with any disability or impairment to use technology to achieve their goals.

Free Helpline **0800 048 7462** / **abilitynet.org.uk**

Age Scotland

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Free Helpline **0800 12 44 222** / **www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland**

Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland

Ethnic minorities-led umbrella body supporting the development of the Ethnic Minorities Voluntary Sector in Scotland.

Tel **0141 255 2133** / **bemis.org.uk**

Breathing Space Scotland

Free, confidential, phone service for anyone in Scotland over 16 experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety.

Free Helpline **0800 83 85 87** / **breathingspace.scot**

BBC

The BBC provides accessibility help, enabling computer users to make the most of the internet whatever their ability or disability.

www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility

Citizens Online

Citizens Online helps organisations ensure their switch to online doesn't exclude people.

www.citizensonline.org.uk

Clear your Head

Things you can do to help clear your head.

clearyourhead.scot

Connecting Scotland

Provides iPads, Chromebooks and support to develop digital skills for people who are digitally excluded, on low incomes and at risk of isolation due to coronavirus.

connecting.scot

Dance Base Feel Like Dancing

Dance Base provides a programme of digital dance resources

www.dancebase.co.uk/feel-like-dancing/older-people-1705



Digital Unite

A unique and comprehensive training and support system for Digital Champions.

www.digitalunite.com

Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network

A gateway to support black and ethnic minority communities to access support agencies, emergency relief or make contact with broader community support initiatives

bemis.org.uk/emnrn

Inclusion Scotland

works to achieve positive changes to policy and practice, so that we disabled people are fully included throughout all Scottish society as equal citizens.

Tel **0131 370 6700** / **inclusionScotland.org**

Later Life Training

Providing specialist, evidence based, effective exercise training for health and exercise professionals working with older people, frailer older people and stroke survivors

www.facebook.com/LaterLifeTraining

Linking Education and Disability (LEAD) Scotland

empowers disabled young people and adults and carers across Scotland to access learning opportunities.

Free Helpline **0800 999 2568**

www.lead.org.uk/free-online-safety-classes

LGBT Age

Works with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people aged 50 and over in Greater Glasgow and the Lothians to shape support services and resources for older LGBT people including social events, community activism, resources and volunteering opportunities.

www.lgbthealth.org.uk/services-support/lgbt-age-2

LGBT Helpline Scotland

Free and confidential access to support, information and advice.

Helpline **0300 123 2523**

www.lgbthealth.org.uk/services-support/helpline

Luminate at home

An online programme of creative activities.

www.luminatescotland.org/luminateathome

Make it Click

Free courses, tools and templates. You can learn new apps and improve the skills you already have

makeitclick.learnmyway.com/directory

NHS Fitness Studio Exercise videos

Instructor-led videos across aerobics exercise, strength and resistance, pilates and yoga

www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio

Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project

Supports black and minority ethnic carers to access support and services appropriate to their caring situation.

Tel **0131 467 2994** / **www.mecopp.org.uk**



NHS One You

Easy home workout videos.

www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos/

NHS Sitting Exercises

Gentle sitting exercises which will help improve your mobility and prevent falls, and can be done at home.

www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises

NHS Strength and flex Exercise Programme

5-week plan consists of a series of equipment-free exercises designed to improve your strength and flexibility

www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flex-exercise-plan/

Paths for All Strength and Balance

Paths for All promote everyday walking for everyone in Scotland, and provide strength and balance programmes.

www.pathsforall.org.uk/walking-for-health/strength-and-balance

Reengage

Supports older people who live alone and find it hard to get out in normal times. UK-wide call companions service is available during coronavirus.

Free Phone **0800 716543** / **www.reengage.org.uk**

Roar - Connections for Life

Supports older people across Renfrewshire who need emotional or practical support. Providing friendship/welfare support service during coronavirus.

Tel **0141 889 7481** (ROAR) / **www.roarforlife.org**



Royal Voluntary Service

Royal Voluntary Service inspires and enables people to give their time by volunteering to meet the needs of the day, in hospitals and in local communities.

www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk

Scottish Business Resilience Centre Cyber Security Factsheets

Stay safe online with easy to follow Cyber Security Factsheets

www.sbrcentre.co.uk/services/cyber-services/cyber-security-factsheets/

Scottish Business Resilience Centre

Information on Zoom etiquette and security

www.sbrcentre.co.uk/media/4944/sbrc_zoom_conferencing.pdf

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

National membership organisation for the voluntary sector, helps voluntary sector organisations across Scotland develop their potential to better support their communities

scvo.org.uk

NHS 24

Co-ordinated, single source of quality assured health and care information for the people of Scotland.

Tel **111** / **www.nhs24.scot**

Samaritans

For anyone who's struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure.

Tel **116 123** / **www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help**

How you can help

Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life.

All the information and advice we provide is free and completely impartial and in helping people access their rights and entitlements, it can be life changing.

We are an ageing population and more people than ever are coming to us for support. You can help us be there for those that need us most.



Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

- Call **03330 15 14 60**
- Visit **age.scot/donate**
- Text **LATERLIFE** to **70085** to donate £5.*



Fundraise

Whether it is having a bake sale, running a marathon or knitting small hats for the Big Knit, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/fundraise**.



Leave us a gift in your Will

By choosing to leave us a gift in your Will, you can help Age Scotland to continue being there for vulnerable older people in the years to come. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/legacy**.

Let's keep in touch



Sign up to our newsletter

Our regular newsletters by email contain details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work.

Sign up today by visiting **age.scot/roundup**



Follow us on social media

Our social media channels are a great way to keep up to date with our work and issues that affect older people.



/agescotland



@AgeScotland



@age_scotland



/AgeScotland

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life.

Contact us:

Head office

0333 323 2400

Age Scotland helpline

0800 12 44 222

Email

info@agescotland.org.uk

Visit our website

www.agescotland.org.uk

Follow us on social media:



/agescotland



@AgeScotland



@age_scotland



/AgeScotland



We are grateful to the
Scottish Government for
part-funding this publication

